

The President's Radio Address *November 10, 2007*

Good morning. This weekend, Americans mark two important dates in our Nation's history. On Saturday, we celebrate the 232d birthday of the United States Marine Corps. And on Sunday, we celebrate Veterans Day and give thanks for all those who have worn the uniform of America's Armed Forces.

The Marine Corps was born in a Philadelphia tavern in 1775. Since then, the Marines have become one of the world's premier fighting forces. Their courage and valor in battle have earned them the respect of friend and foe alike. And today, a new generation of marines is writing another chapter in that proud tradition. Young marines are serving on the frontlines in the war on terror in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world. As the Marines celebrate their birthday, we join them in recognizing what their sacrifice and service has meant for our freedom.

America owes a debt of gratitude to all those who have served in our Armed Forces. On Veterans Day, we remember those who have served in previous wars, those who are serving today, and those who did not live to become veterans.

Veterans Day also reminds us of our solemn responsibility to care for those who have fought our Nation's wars. Under my administration, Federal spending for our veterans has increased by more than two-thirds. We have extended medical treatment to a million additional veterans, including hundreds of thousands returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. And we have expanded grants to help homeless veterans across the country.

These are the generous actions of a grateful nation. And to build on them, I nominated a good man to head our Department of Veterans Affairs, Doctor James Peake. Doctor Peake is an Army doctor, a retired lieutenant general, and a combat

veteran who was wounded twice in Vietnam and decorated for his valor.

When confirmed by the Senate, Doctor Peake will take on an important task: continuing my administration's work to implement the recommendations of the bipartisan Dole-Shalala Commission on Wounded Warriors. These recommendations are vital to ensuring better care for our veterans, and Congress needs to confirm Doctor Peake so he can lead the way in this crucial effort.

Some of the Commission's recommendations require legislative action, such as updating the disability system to fully meet the needs of our wounded warriors. So my administration has sent Congress a bill that would enact all the legislative steps recommended by the Commission. This is a good bill. Our wounded warriors and their families are counting on it, and I urge Democrats and Republicans to come together to pass it as quickly as possible.

Congress can also meet its responsibility to our veterans by passing a clean Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. Unfortunately, congressional leaders let the fiscal year end without passing this bill they know our veterans need. So I urged Congress to pass this bill by Veterans Day, and they still have failed to send me this vital legislation. The time to act is running out. There are now just 4 days left on the legislative calendar before Congress leaves town for their Thanksgiving break. The best way Members of Congress can give thanks to our veterans is to send me a clean bill that I can sign into law.

On this Veterans Day, I urge every American to take time to thank one of our Nation's 24 million veterans. They come from different generations and different backgrounds. But they are united by a commitment to honor, duty, and love of country that has kept America free. They continue

to strengthen and inspire our Nation. And we will never forget what we owe them.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on November 9 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on

November 9, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to former Sen. Robert J. Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

The President's News Conference With Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany in Crawford *November 10, 2007*

President Bush. I want to thank you for coming. The Chancellor and I have had a series of discussions on important subjects, starting with a dinner we had last night. And then we got up this morning and had the wonderful opportunity to walk across some of the ranch. It was a glorious morning. The sun was beginning to rise; the birds were beginning to chirp. And we were able to have a meaningful discussion on a lot of issues. And then we completed our discussions here in what is my office.

Madam Chancellor, I'm really glad you gave me an excuse to come down to Texas. And I'm really glad you and Professor Sauer came. You can imagine how conducive it is to have meaningful, strategic discussions in an environment outside of our respective capitals. And that's what we did.

We discussed Afghanistan. I do want to thank the German people for their strong support of this young democracy. And I appreciate the German troops who are far from home, who are helping people realize the blessings of liberty.

We discussed Iran and our deep desire to solve this important issue diplomatically. And I believe we can solve it diplomatically, and it is more likely we do so when the United States, Germany, and other nations work collaboratively to send a common and firm message to the Iranians that

it is—the free world does not think you should have the capacity to be able to make a nuclear weapon. And we will work according—together accordingly.

We talked about Iraq. I want to thank Chancellor Merkel for understanding that success in Iraq is important for Middle Eastern peace. I fully understand that our nations have had difference of opinion on this issue, but now that this Iraqi democracy is emerging, I really appreciate the fact that Germany has been a constructive partner in the compact—constructive partner with Iraq in the compact. And I appreciate very much the fact that the German Government is committed to help train police in the UAE.

I want to thank the Chancellor for her clear vision on issues such as Kosovo and Burma and Lebanon. We discussed the Middle Eastern peace. The upcoming Annapolis Conference is an important moment as we head toward two states living side by side in peace.

We had a very good discussion on Doha and the need for Germany and Europe and the United States to work closely together with developing nations such as Brazil and India to advance the Doha round. I appreciated very much the Chancellor's briefing on her trip to India. It helps a lot for